



# News Release

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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### **CONNECTICUT CHILDREN SHOW SUPPORT FOR CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE**

**CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.** – The children of Connecticut appreciate Team Charleston's efforts in the war on terrorism, and they showed that appreciation when they sent a signed 3- by 10-foot banner praising the base for its fight in the war on terrorism.

The banner was presented to the aircrew of the Spirit of Connecticut C-17 Globemaster III, maintenance members and wing leadership at a Pratt and Whitney conference at the North Charleston Convention Center Feb. 26.

Pratt and Whitney, manufacturers of the F-117 engine used on C-17s, hosted the Air Force, the Boeing Company and United Airlines at a Technical Interchange Meeting and Program Management Review conference. The four-day conference, which is held every six months, focuses primarily on the C-17 engine and various technical issues.

The banner, which will be displayed in the 437th Airlift Wing headquarters' lobby, was the result of the pharmaceutical giant Bayer Corporation. Bayer used the banner during a generous fundraiser for Connecticut families affected by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The United Way was used to distribute funds to the families.

The fundraiser was called "Connecticut Kids for Kids," and the idea was to encourage elementary school-age kids to help other kids during this time of great need. At a fundraiser, the vinyl banner was put on display for people to sign. Employees of Pratt and Whitney also signed the banner later.

The folks at Bayer were awed by the C-17 Spirit of Connecticut ceremony coverage Oct. 12 and decided it would be nice to present the banner to the base as a gift for their efforts in the war, explained retired Brig. Gen. Steve Roser, a Pratt and Whitney executive attending the conference and a former 437 AW commander. Eleven members from Charleston AFB, including Col. Karl Young, 437 AW vice commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Harvey Hampton, 437 AW command chief master sergeant, were part of the crew that flew the aircraft to the naming ceremony held at the Connecticut Air National Guard Base at Bradley International Airport.

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“After the kids saw the Spirit of Connecticut dedication on local TV with the Charleston crew and maintenance, they were so impressed with them that they wanted to dedicate this banner to the Spirit of Connecticut and the folks at Charleston AFB who are fighting the war for us,” Roser said.

Roser said the banner was given to Pratt and Whitney and they were to make sure the base received it later. “This conference was a great opportunity since we had all the maintenance folks working on the engine and we took this opportunity to present it to Charleston.”

Staff Sgt. Eric Walker, 315th Aircraft Generation Squadron and jet engine mechanic who flew to Connecticut for the dedication ceremony, was on hand to accept the banner.

“On the flight out there, I was happy just to go along, and it made a big impact on me on what the Pratt and Whitney people do to make these engines,” said Walker. “I have a background in education and working with kids, and the presentation today meant a lot to me.”

Tech. Sgt. Michael Hall, a jet-engine mechanic in the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron and original crewmember, agreed that the presentation was special.

“I got to show the public, and Pratt and Whitney employees, around the aircraft when we flew up there,” said Hall. “Most people had never seen a C-17 up close.” He added the banner presentation made him feel proud because “somebody actually thinks about us.”

Roser said the German-based Bayer Company was also extremely impressed with the Spirit of Connecticut ceremony.

“Big corporations, like Bayer and Pratt and Whitney, are very patriotic, and this is something we wanted to do,” said Roser.

Pratt and Whitney employees are still talking about the C-17 Spirit of Connecticut ceremony because it was their first chance for many to see the engines on the aircraft, according to Roser.

“To see the finished product and people in BDUs and flight suits, when their whole life is spent building one segment of an engine, was special,” said Roser.

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